



# PURANDARA DASA

THE FATHER OF CARNATIC MUSIC

Vol.DG453

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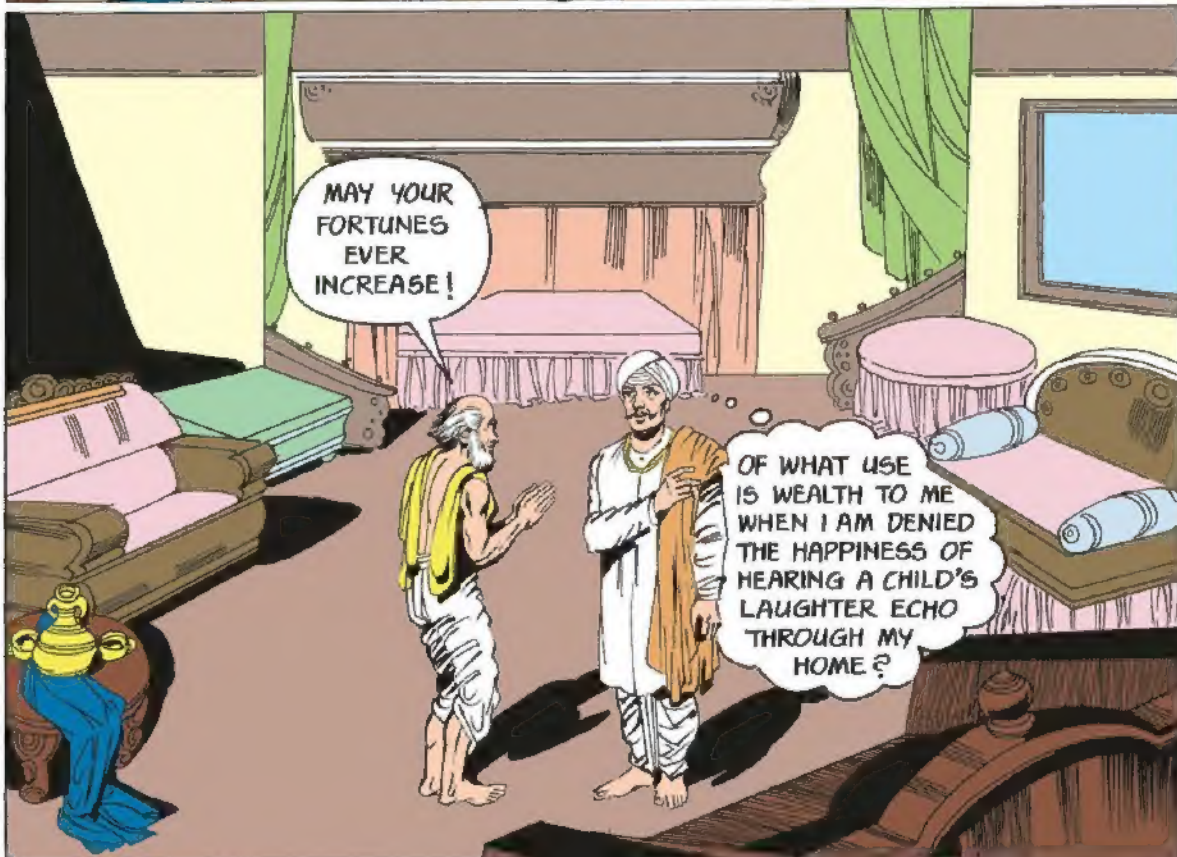
# PURANDARA DASA



VARADAPPA NAYAK WAS A RICH JEWELLER WHO LIVED IN PURANDARGAD, NEAR POONA, DURING THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

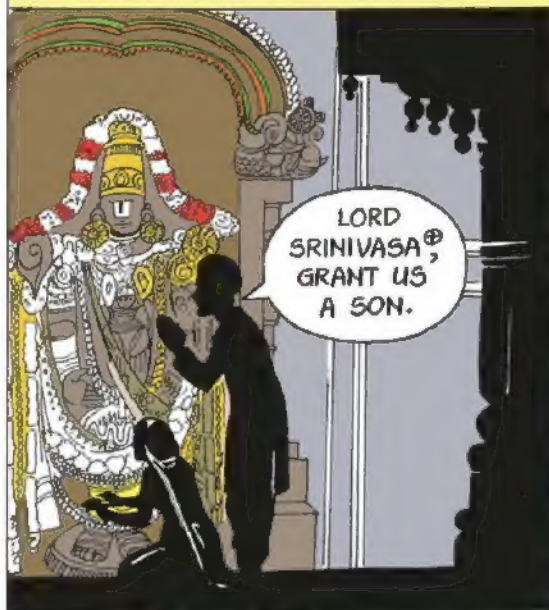


NO ONE WHO CAME TO HIM FOR HELP EVER WENT AWAY DISAPPOINTED.





AT LAST, PIOUS VARADAPPA AND HIS WIFE VISITED THE TEMPLE OF VENKATESHWARA\* AT TIRUPATI.



THEIR PRAYERS DID NOT GO UNHEARD. A YEAR LATER —



WHILE HIS MOTHER TRIED TO INCULCATE IN LITTLE SRINIVASA A LOVE OF GOD BY TELLING HIM STORIES FROM THE SCRIPTURES...



... WHAT SRINIVASA ENJOYED MOST WAS PLAYING WITH THE FAKE COINS HIS FATHER GAVE HIM.



\* ALSO KNOWN AS BALAJI

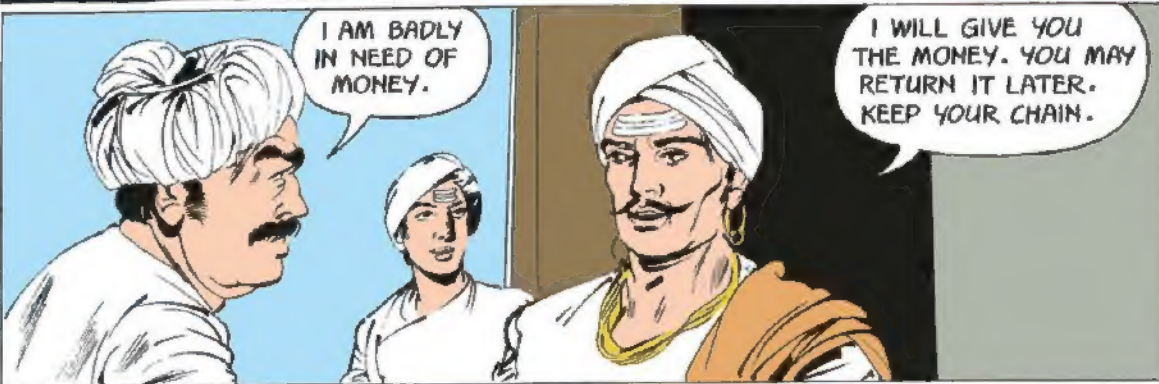
Ⓢ ANOTHER NAME OF VENKATESHWARA



WHEN HE GREW UP, SRINIVASA BEGAN TO ACCOMPANY HIS FATHER TO THE SHOP.



AT THE SHOP, HE OBSERVED HOW HIS FATHER DEALT WITH THE CUSTOMERS.



\* PANA WAS A COPPER COIN, 20 PANAS = ONE VARAHA (GOLD COIN)



WHEN SRINIVASA CAME OF AGE, HE WAS MARRIED TO SARASWATI.



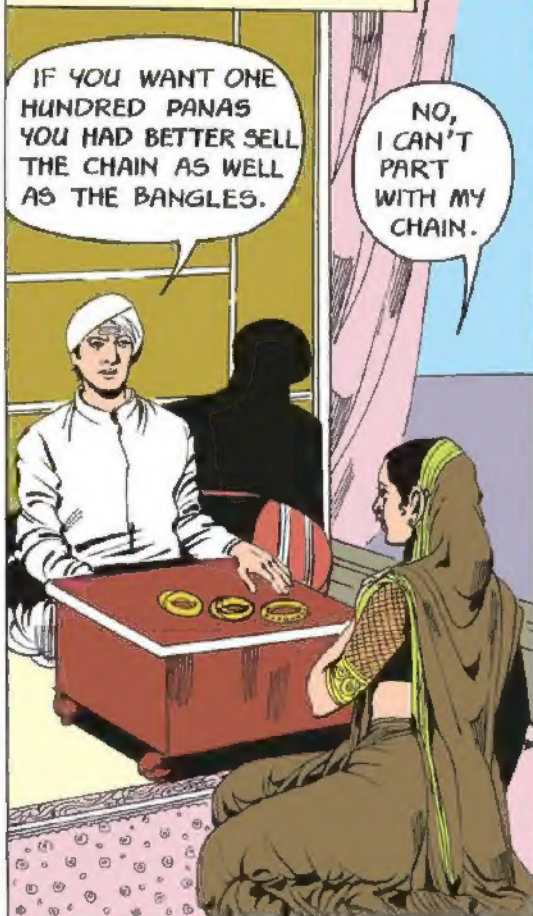
SOON AFTER THE WEDDING, VARADAPPA SENT FOR HIS SON.



YOU MUST NOW RELIEVE ME OF MY BUSINESS. I WISH TO DEVOTE MY TIME TO WORSHIP.

AS YOU PLEASE, FATHER.

SRINIVASA NAYAK'S WAY OF DOING BUSINESS WAS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE PIOUS VARADAPPA NAYAK.



IF YOU WANT ONE HUNDRED PANAS YOU HAD BETTER SELL THE CHAIN AS WELL AS THE BANGLES.

NO, I CAN'T PART WITH MY CHAIN.



AND I CAN'T PART WITH MY MONEY.

BUT I NEED MONEY BADLY. ALL RIGHT! HERE! TAKE IT!



APART FROM BEING MERCILESS WITH HIS CUSTOMERS, SRINIVASA WAS A MISER TOO.

SRINIVASA NAYAK,  
WE ARE BUILDING A  
TEMPLE FOR LORD  
VENKATESHWARA.  
WE HAVE COME  
FOR A DONATION  
FROM YOU.

WHY DON'T YOU  
GO TO THE LORD  
HIMSELF FOR IT?

UNLIKE HER HUSBAND,  
SARASWATI WAS VERY KIND  
AND COMPASSIONATE.  
ONE DAY —

MOTHER,  
ALMS FOR  
A BEGGAR.

PLEASE  
WAIT. I WILL  
GET YOU  
SOME RICE.

AS SHE CAME OUT WITH THE RICE, SRINIVASA  
NAYAK RETURNED FROM THE SHOP.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?  
IF WE HAVE TOO MUCH  
RICE IN THE HOUSE,  
TELL ME. I'LL SEE THAT  
WE BUY LESS.



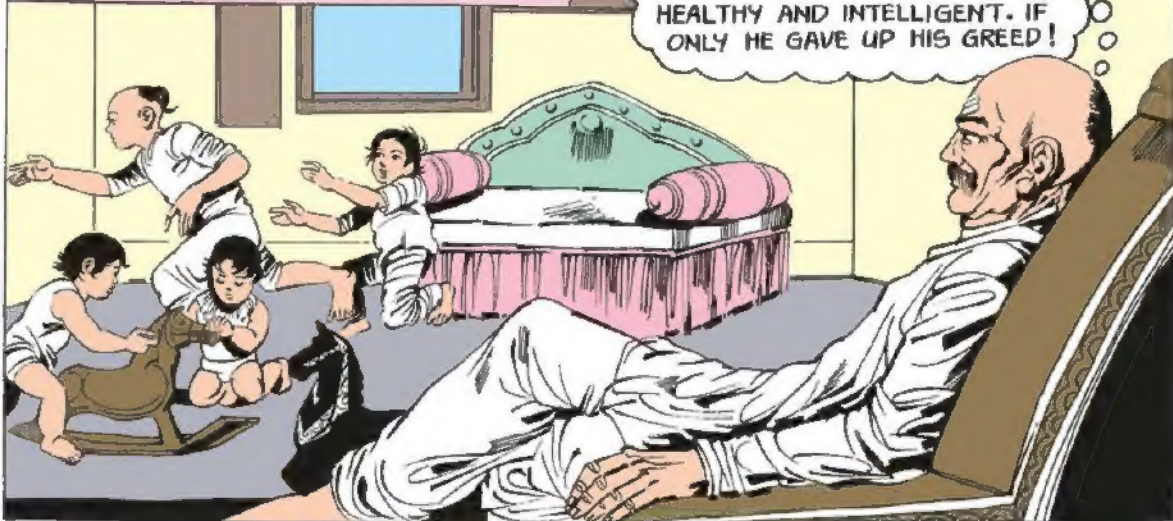


\* A PLANT DEIFIED BY ORTHODOX HINDUS.



AS THE YEARS PASSED, SRINIVASA NAYAK AND SARASWATI HAD FOUR SONS.

SRINIVASA IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE SO MANY CHILDREN, ALL HEALTHY AND INTELLIGENT. IF ONLY HE GAVE UP HIS GREED!



ONE DAY, OLD VARAD-APPA NAYAK FELL ILL. A VAIDYA \* CAME TO EXAMINE HIM.

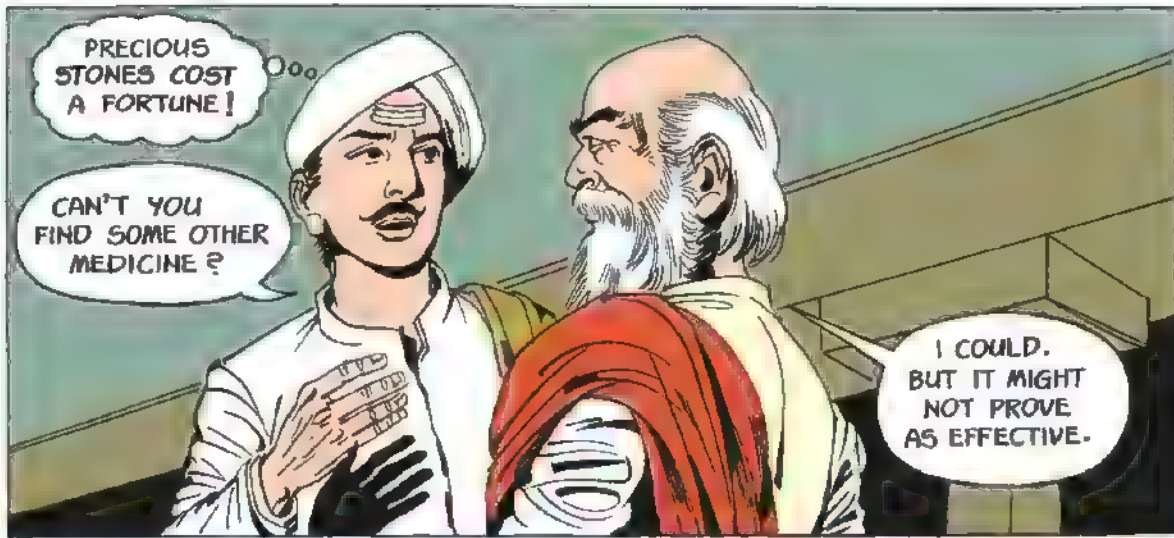


I NEED THE ASHES OF PRECIOUS STONES TO CURE HIM. GET ME SOME.



\* DOCTOR

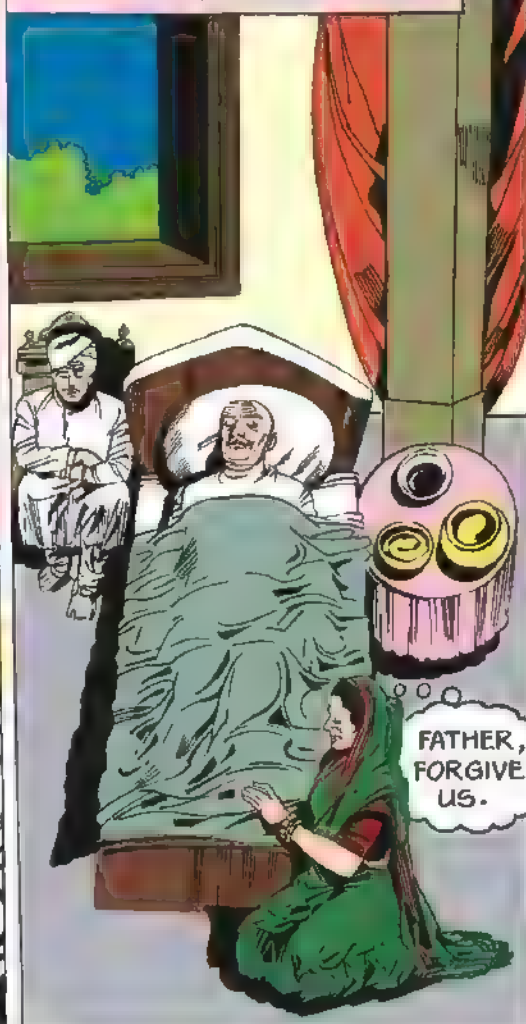




SARASWATI TRIED TO REASON WITH HIM.



THE NEXT DAY, VARADAPPA DIED.





A FEW DAYS LATER, AN OLD BRAHMAN APPROACHED SRINIVASA NAYAK.

BLESSED ONE, I NEED MONEY TO PERFORM MY SON'S THREAD CEREMONY. WILL YOU HELP ME?



I AM BUSY. COME TOMORROW.

SRINIVASA NAYAK MADE HIM WALK TO HIS SHOP FOR SIX MONTHS WITHOUT GIVING HIM A SINGLE VARAHA.

IMBECILE! CAN'T HE UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF HELPING HIM OUT.



THE NEXT WEEK, AT THE TIME OF STOCK-TAKING IN HIS SHOP, SRINIVASA CAME ACROSS A HEAVY BOX.

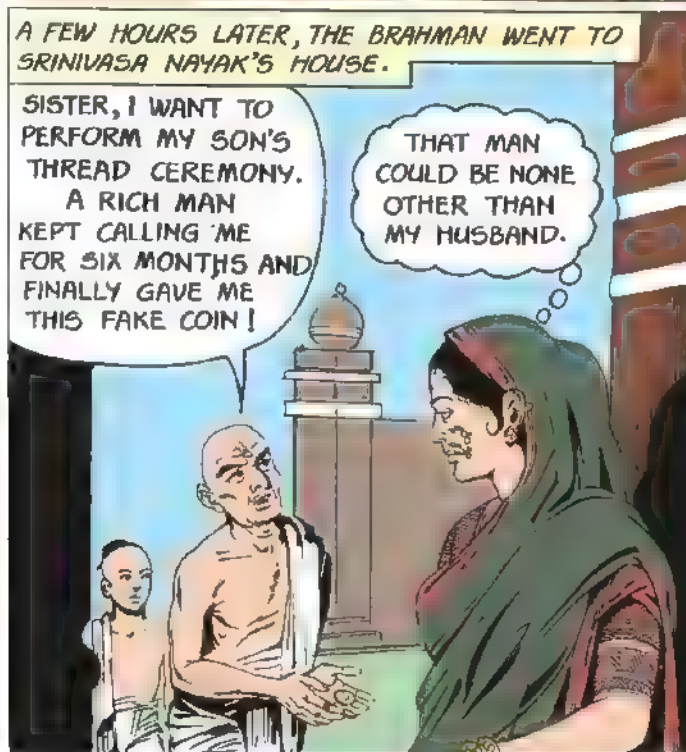
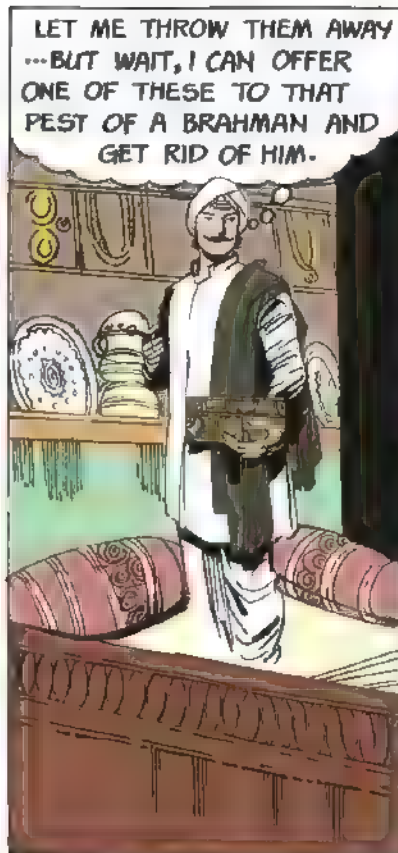


WHAT COULD THIS BOX CONTAIN?



FAKE COINS! THE COINS I USED TO PLAY WITH!













SRINIVASA NAYAK DECIDED TO PLAY FOR TIME TO PROBE INTO THE MATTER.



SRINIVASA NAYAK LOCKED THE NOSE-RING IN A BOX ...





...AND RUSHED HOME.

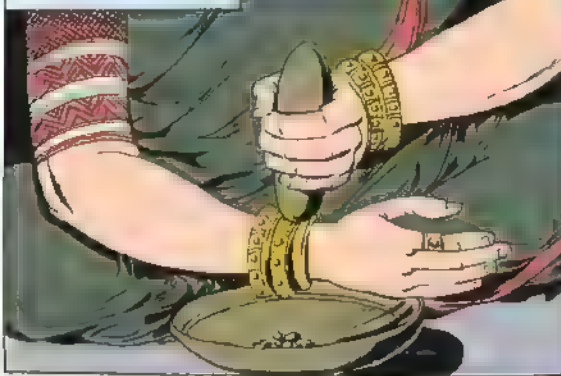


SARASWATI ENTERED THE PUJA-ROOM\* AND LOCKED HERSELF IN.



\* THE ROOM WHERE THE HOUSEHOLD DEITIES ARE KEPT AND WORSHIPPED.

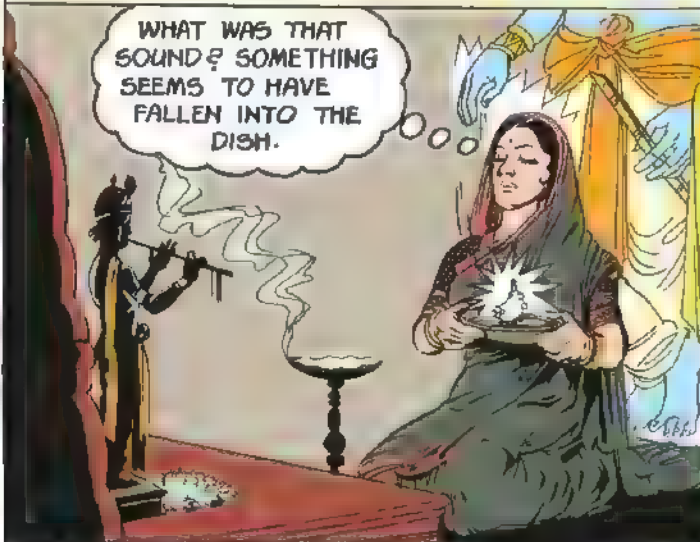
SHE DISLODGED THE DIAMONDS FROM  
HER BANGLES...



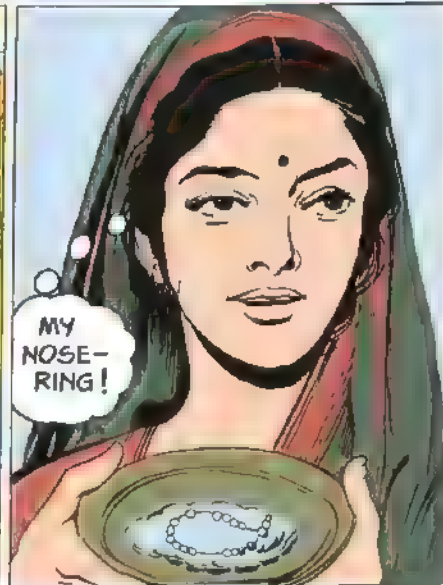
...CRUSHED THEM AND MIXED THE  
POWDER WITH WATER.



WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT TO SWALLOW THE MIXTURE—

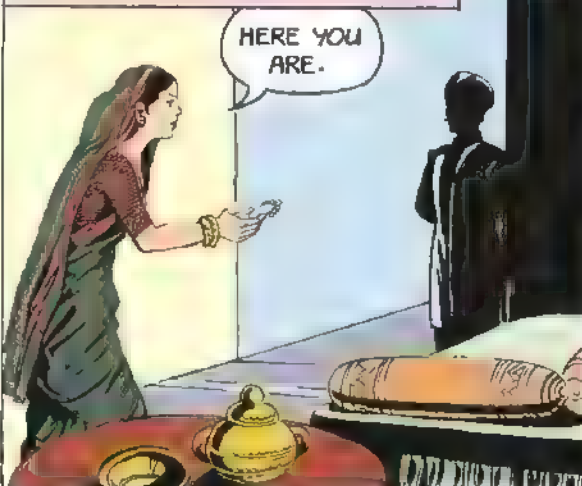


WHAT WAS THAT  
SOUND? SOMETHING  
SEEMS TO HAVE  
FALLEN INTO THE  
DISH.



MY  
NOSE-  
RING!

SHE RUSHED TO HER HUSBAND.



HERE YOU  
ARE.

SRINIVASA NAYAK EXAMINED IT.



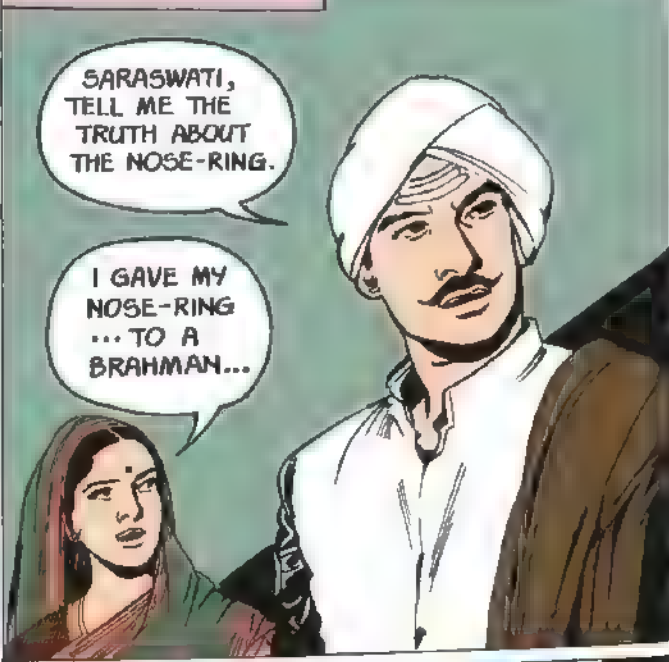
YES, THIS LOOKS  
EXACTLY LIKE THE  
ONE GIVEN TO ME  
BY THE OLD  
BRAHMAN. WHAT  
A MYSTERY!



SRINIVASA NAYAK HURRIED BACK TO HIS SHOP AND UNLOCKED THE BOX.



HE RAN BACK HOME.





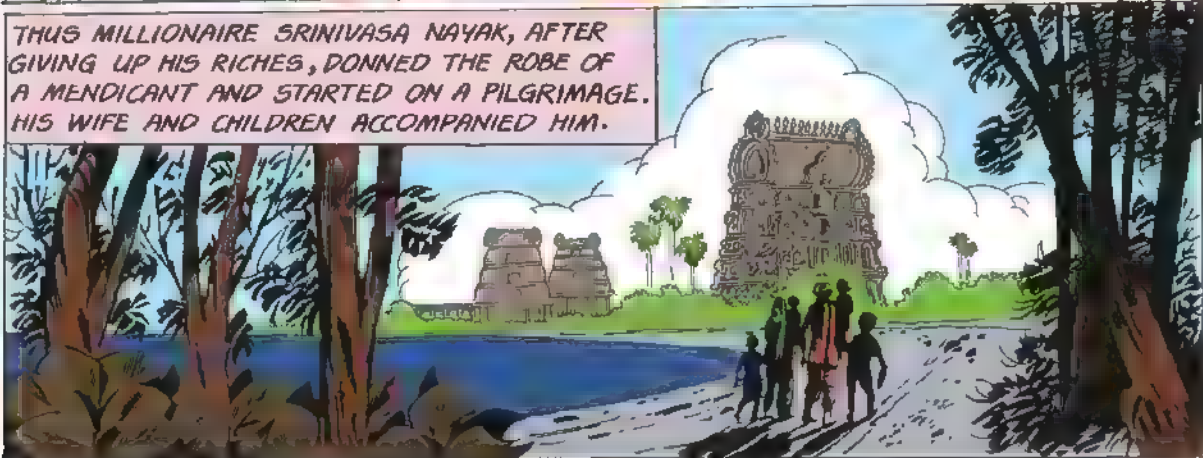
SRINIVASA NAYAK DISTRIBUTED ALL HIS WEALTH TO THE POOR AND DESERVING.



HE BECAME A DASA.\*



THUS MILLIONAIRE SRINIVASA NAYAK, AFTER GIVING UP HIS RICHES, DONNED THE ROBE OF A MENDICANT AND STARTED ON A PILGRIMAGE. HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN ACCOMPANIED HIM.



\* VAISHNAVITES WHO SURRENDERED THEMSELVES TO GOD, CALLED THEMSELVES DASAS.



WANDERING FROM PLACE TO PLACE, SRINIVASA NAYAK CAME TO VIJAYANAGARA WHERE HE MET THE RENOWNED SAINT, VYASATEERTHA.

I, SRINIVASA NAYAK OF PURANDARGAD, OFFER MY SALUTATIONS TO YOU.



YOU HAVE STARTED A NEW LIFE. I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW NAME AS WELL. HENCEFORTH YOU WILL BE KNOWN AS PURANDARA DASA.

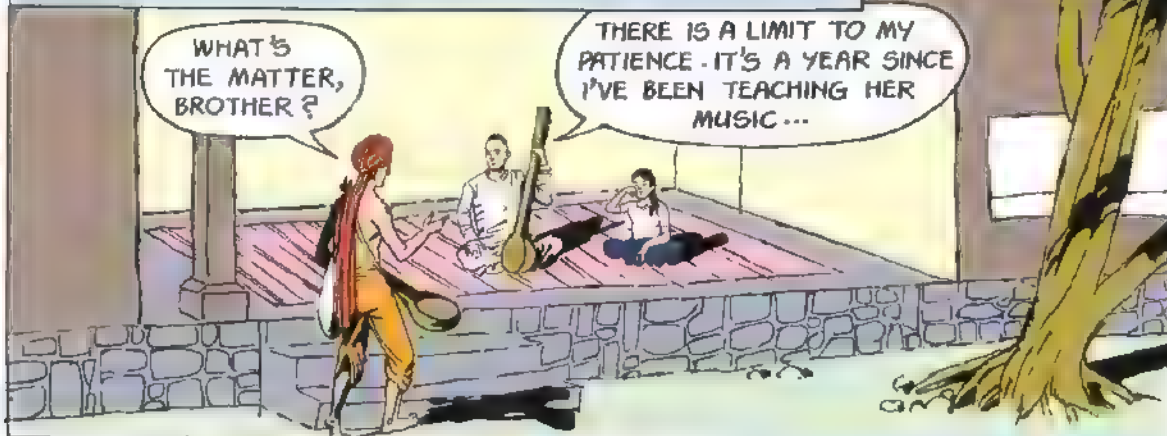
PURANDARA DASA USED TO GO OUT ON THE STREETS OF VIJAYANAGARA SINGING SONGS IN PRAISE OF GOD. PEOPLE USED TO FALL AT HIS FEET AND MAKE OFFERINGS TO HIM.



HOW MELODIOUS!

HOW PREGNANT WITH MEANING ARE HIS SONGS!

ONE DAY, HE SAW A MUSIC TEACHER SCOLDING HIS PUPIL.

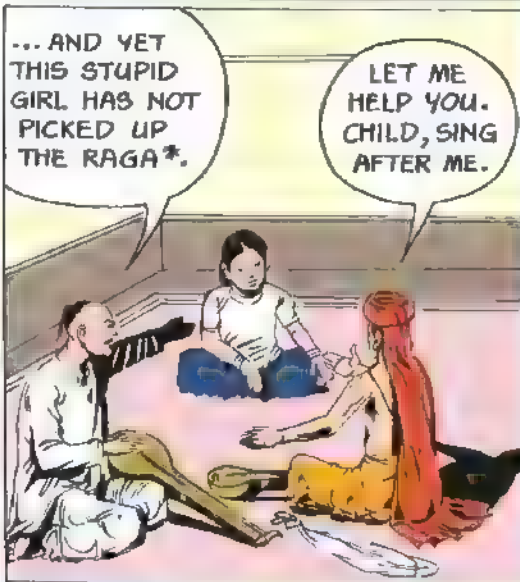


WHAT'S THE MATTER, BROTHER?

THERE IS A LIMIT TO MY PATIENCE. IT'S A YEAR SINCE I'VE BEEN TEACHING HER MUSIC...

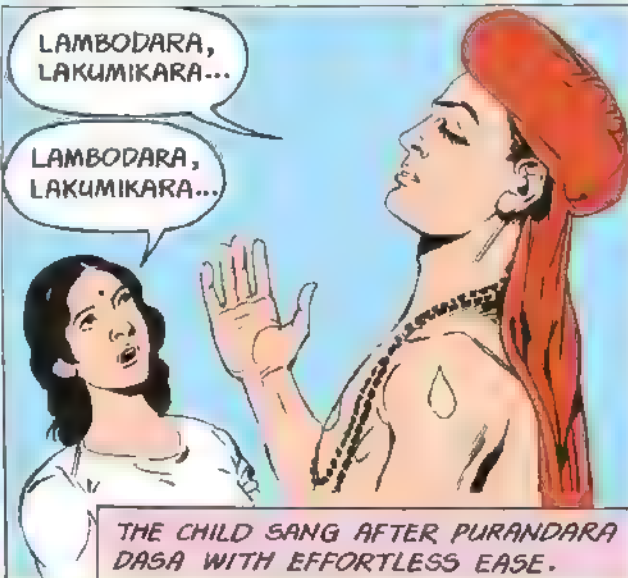
...AND YET THIS STUPID GIRL HAS NOT PICKED UP THE RAGA\*.

LET ME HELP YOU. CHILD, SING AFTER ME.



LAMBODARA, LAKUMIKARA...

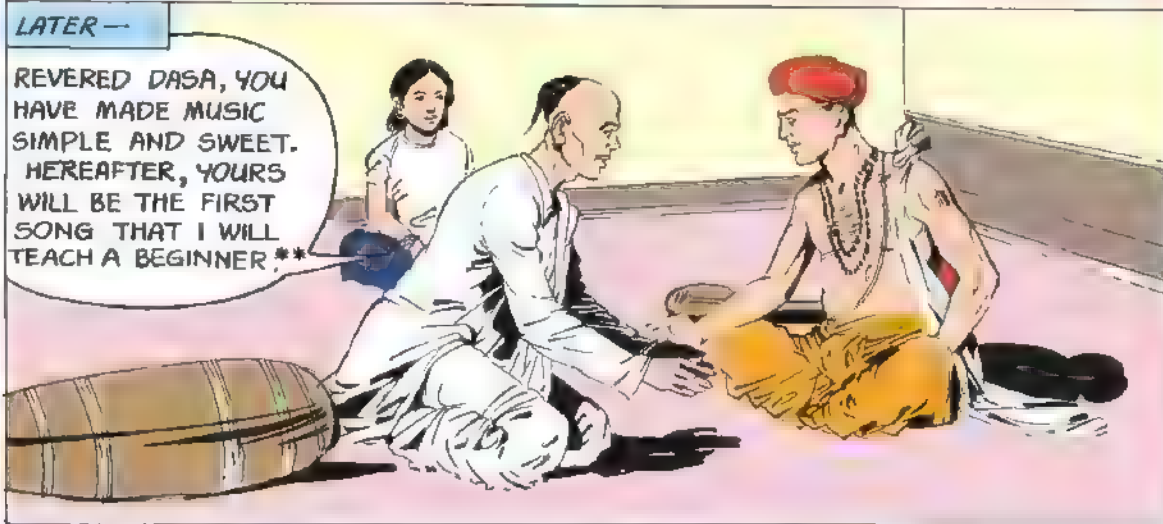
LAMBODARA, LAKUMIKARA...



THE CHILD SANG AFTER PURANDARA DASA WITH EFFORTLESS EASE.

LATER—

REVERED DASA, YOU HAVE MADE MUSIC SIMPLE AND SWEET. HEREAFTER, YOURS WILL BE THE FIRST SONG THAT I WILL TEACH A BEGINNER.\*\*



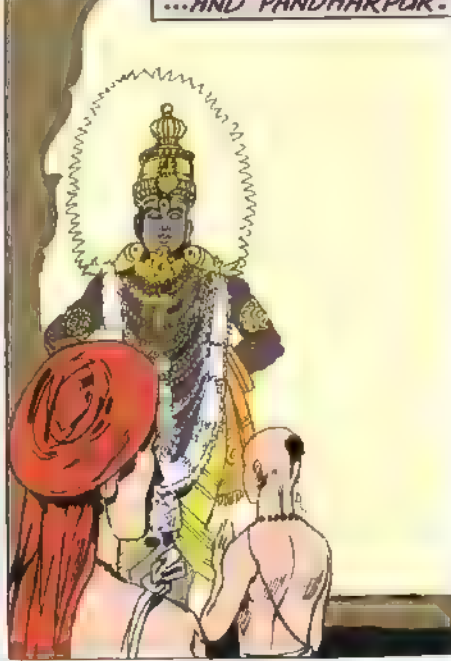
\* MUSICAL MODE \*\* THIS PRACTICE IS MAINTAINED TO THIS DAY.



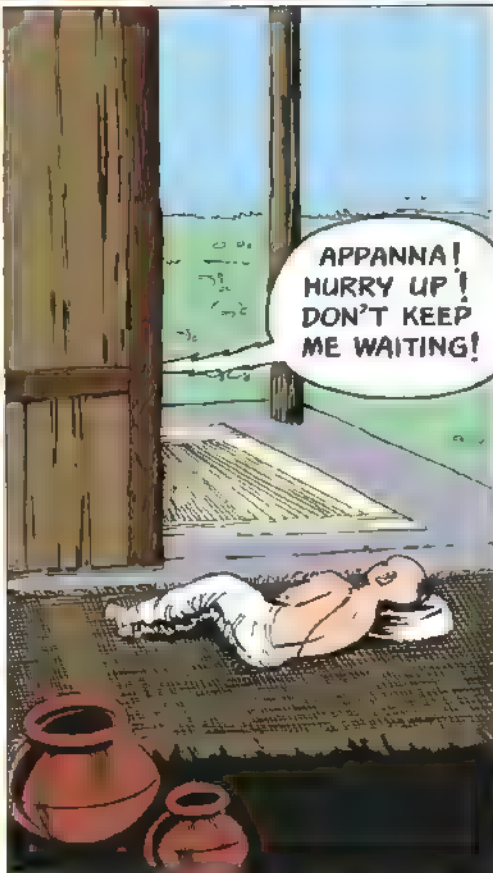
EVER ON THE MOVE, PURANDARA DASA, FOLLOWED BY HIS FAITHFUL DISCIPLE APPANNA, VISITED TIRUPATI...

...UDUPI...

...AND PANDHARPUR.



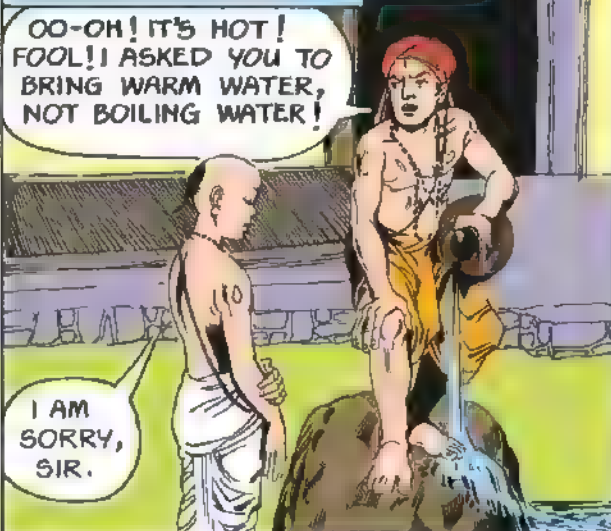
ONE DAY, WHILE THEY WERE AT PANDHARPUR —



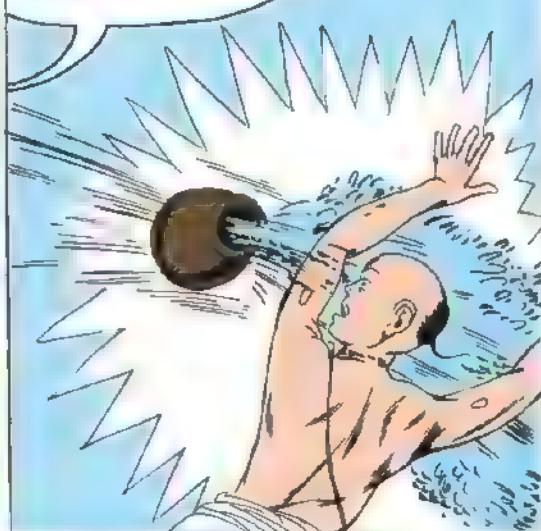
A FEW MINUTES LATER —



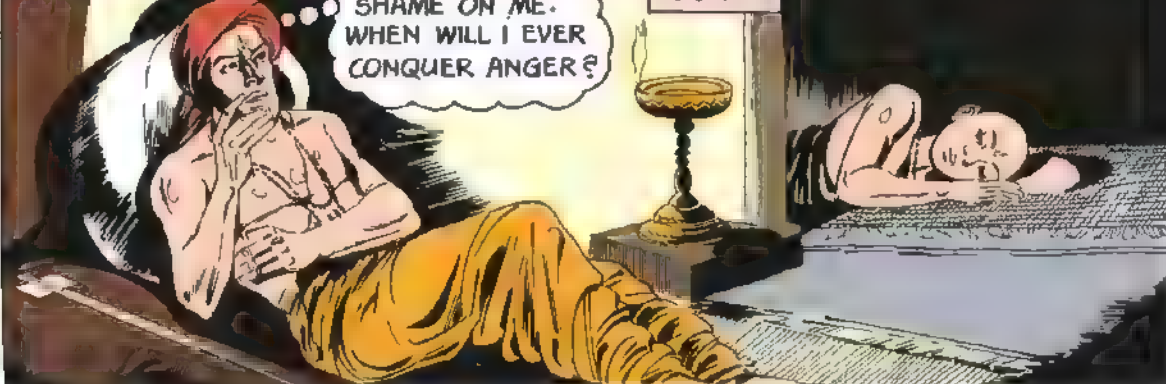
TAKING THE PITCHER FROM HIM,  
PURANDARA DASA POURED THE  
WATER ON HIS FEET —



THIS WILL TEACH  
YOU TO BE CAREFUL  
NEXT TIME.

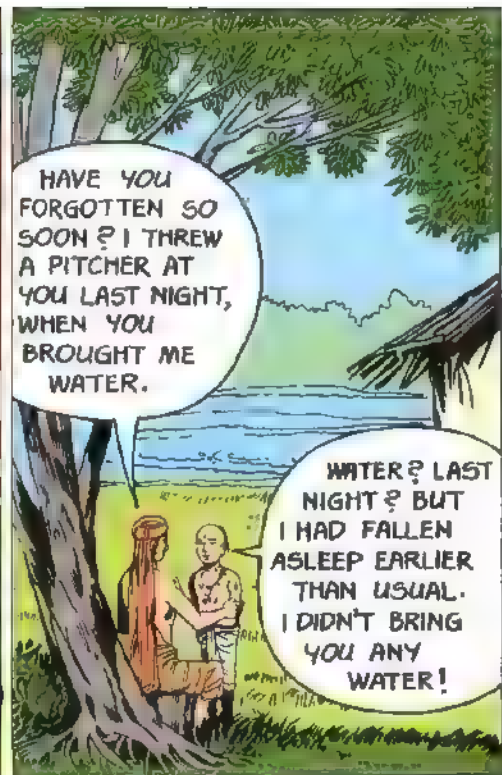
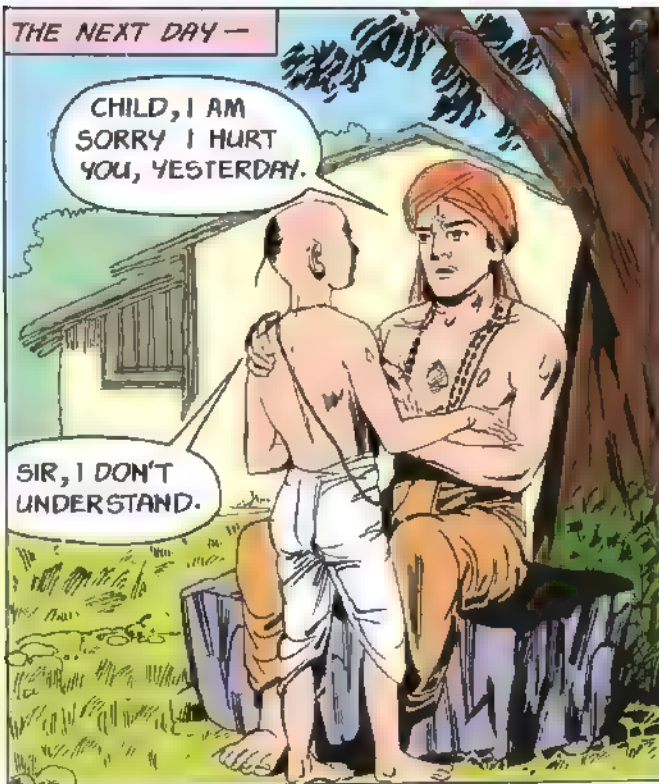


THAT NIGHT, HOWEVER, PURANDARA DASA COULDN'T  
SLEEP. HE WAS FULL OF REMORSE FOR WHAT HE HAD  
DONE.





THE NEXT DAY —



PURANDARA DASA WAS PERPLEXED.

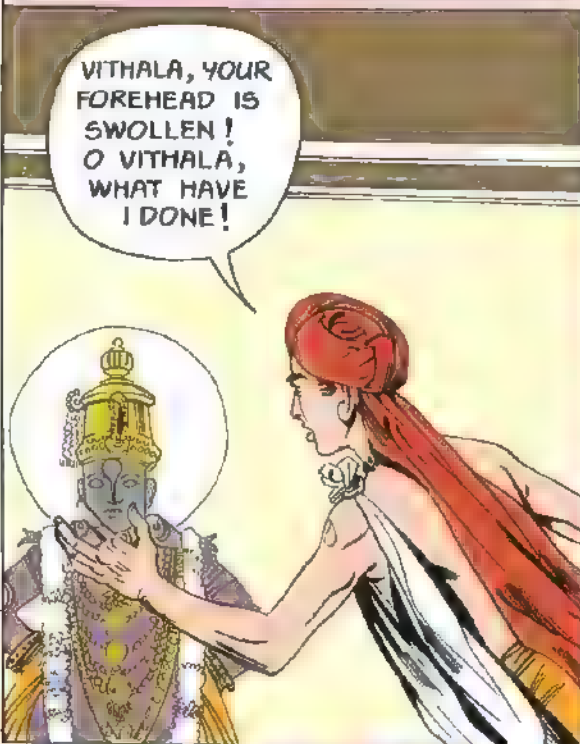


HE WENT TO THE TEMPLE OF VITHALA\*.



\* ANOTHER NAME FOR PANDURANG.

SUDDENLY, PURANDARA DASA RUSHED TOWARDS THE IDOL OF VITHALA.



YOU HAVE NOT DONE ANYTHING, DASA. CONTROL YOURSELF. NOTHING HAS HAPPENED TO THE LORD.



PURANDARA DASA BURST INTO TEARS.

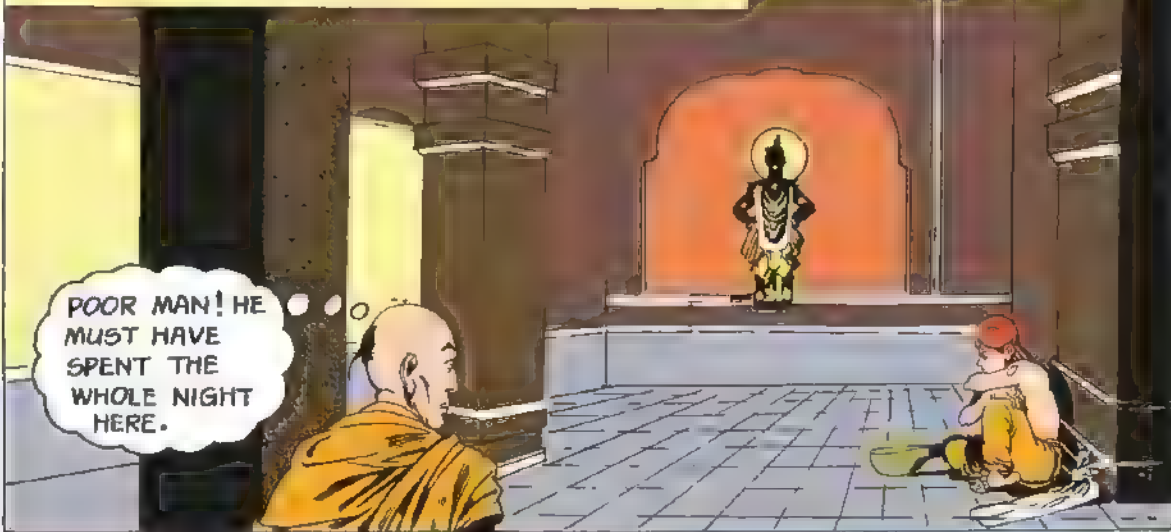


THE WHOLE OF THAT DAY, HE DID NOT EAT A THING. WHEN THE PRIEST LEFT FOR HOME, PURANDARA DASA WAS STILL AT THE TEMPLE.





THE NEXT MORNING WHEN THE PRIEST CAME TO OPEN THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLE, HE FOUND PURANDARA DASA STILL THERE.



POOR MAN! HE  
MUST HAVE  
SPENT THE  
WHOLE NIGHT  
HERE.

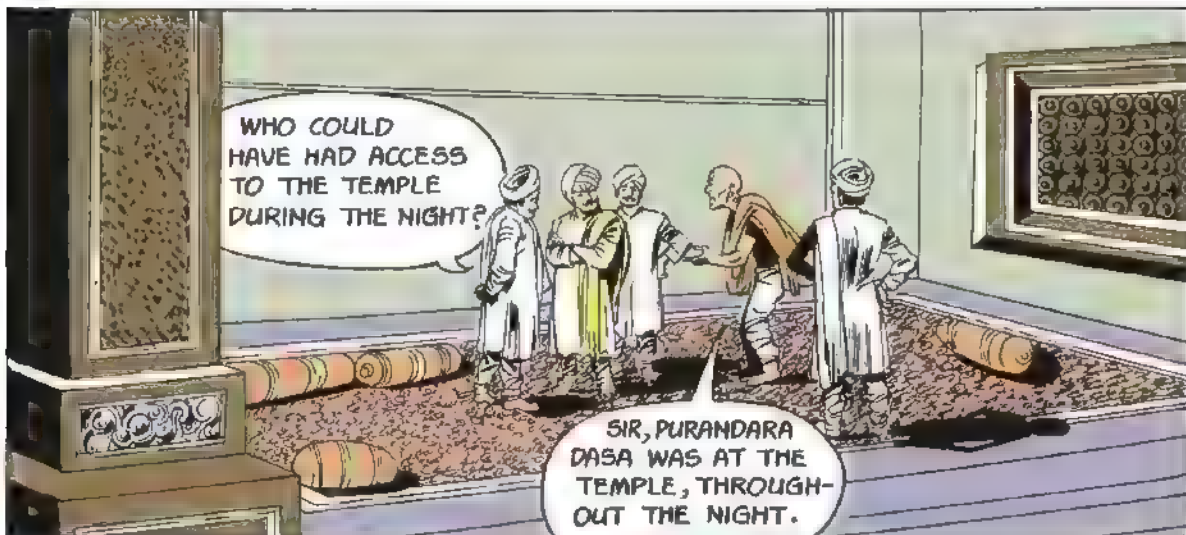


MY GOD,  
THE BRACELETS  
OF THE LORD  
ARE MISSING!

THE PRIEST RAN TO THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE TEMPLE.



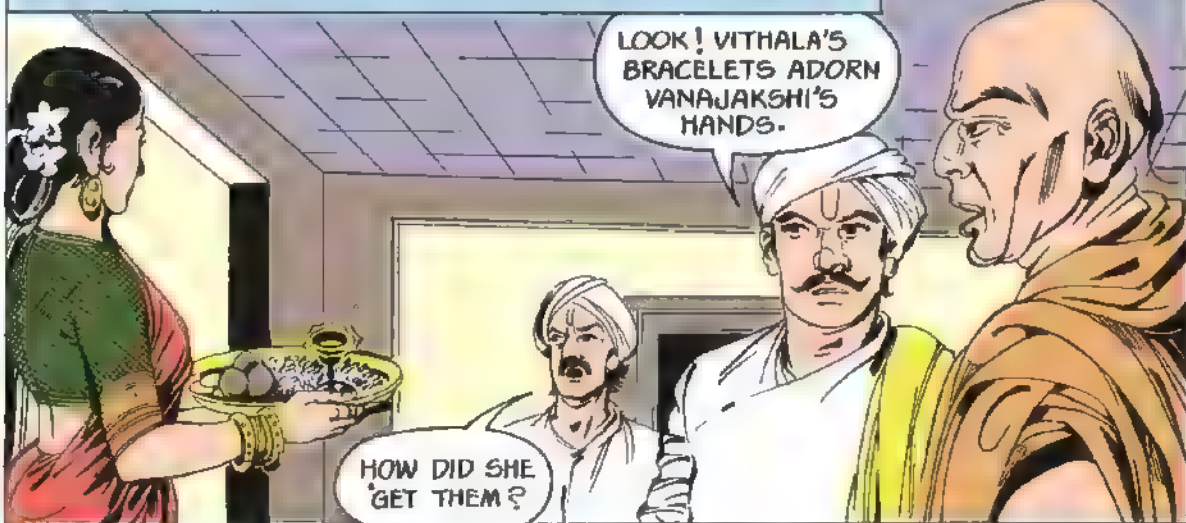
A THIEF MUST HAVE  
BROKEN IN AND STOLEN  
THE GOLD BRACELETS.



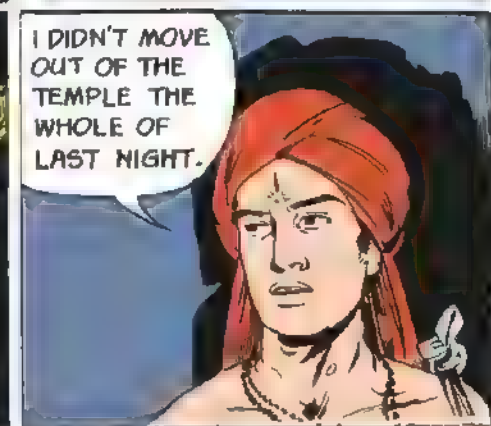
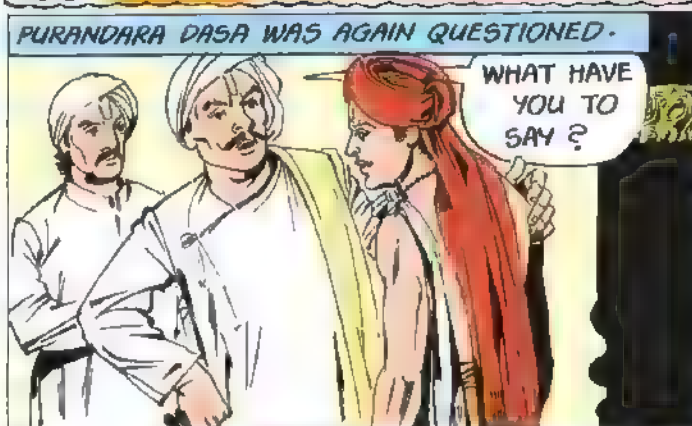
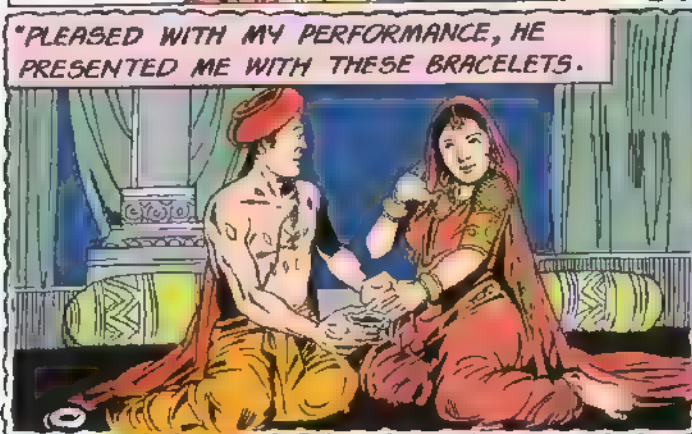
WHEN PURANDARA DASA WAS QUESTIONED—



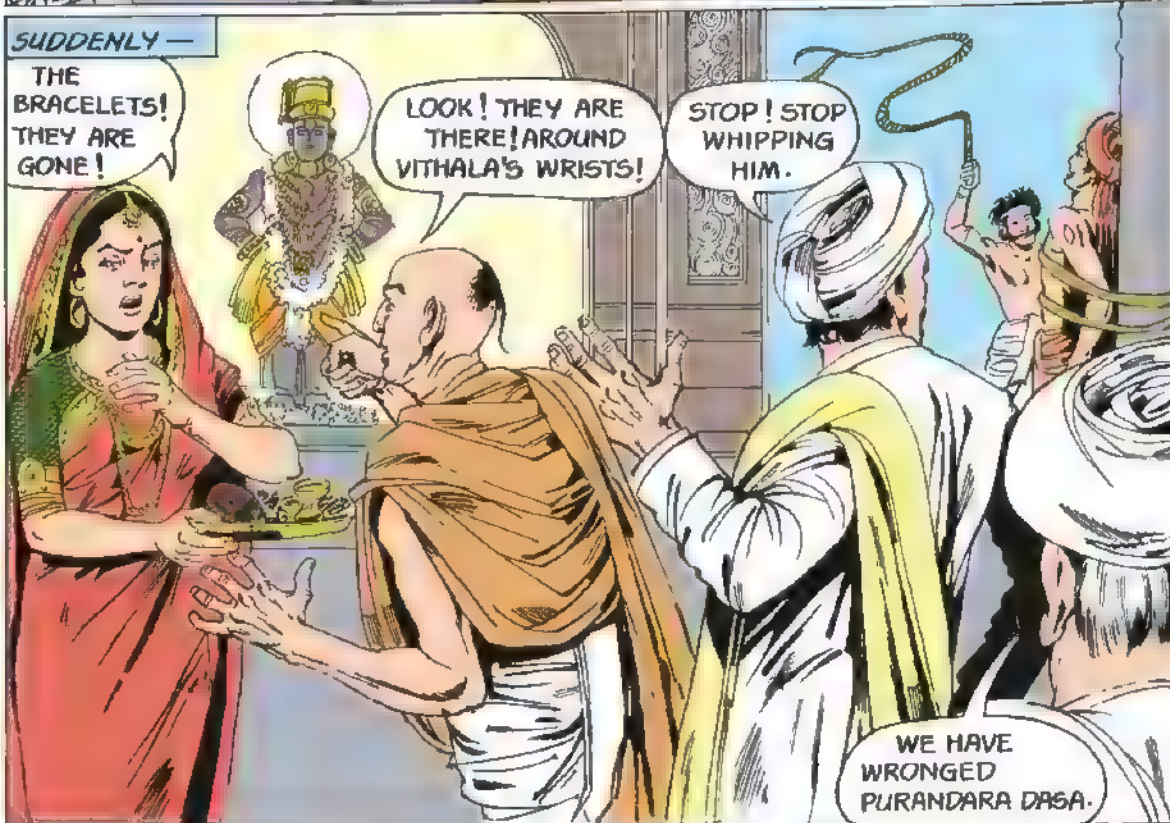
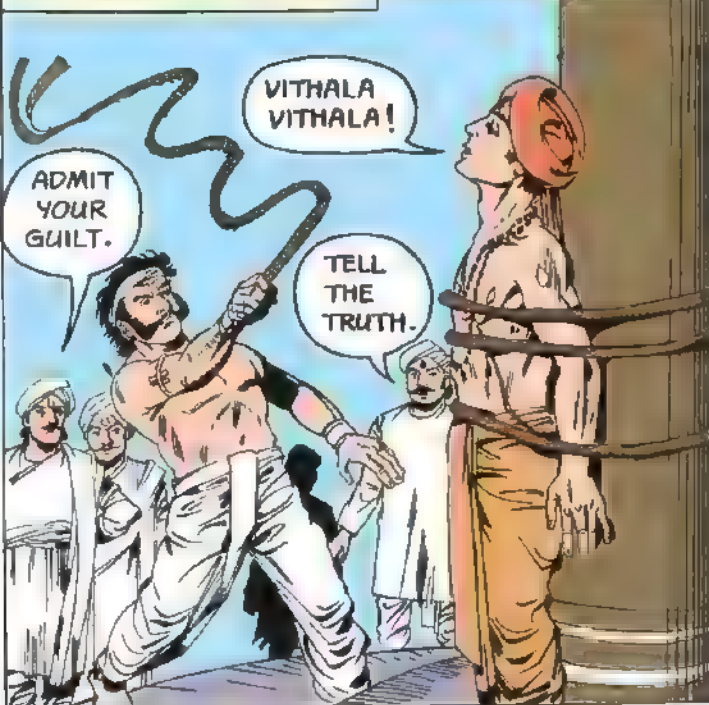
JUST THEN VANAJAKSHI, A DANCER ENTERED THE TEMPLE.



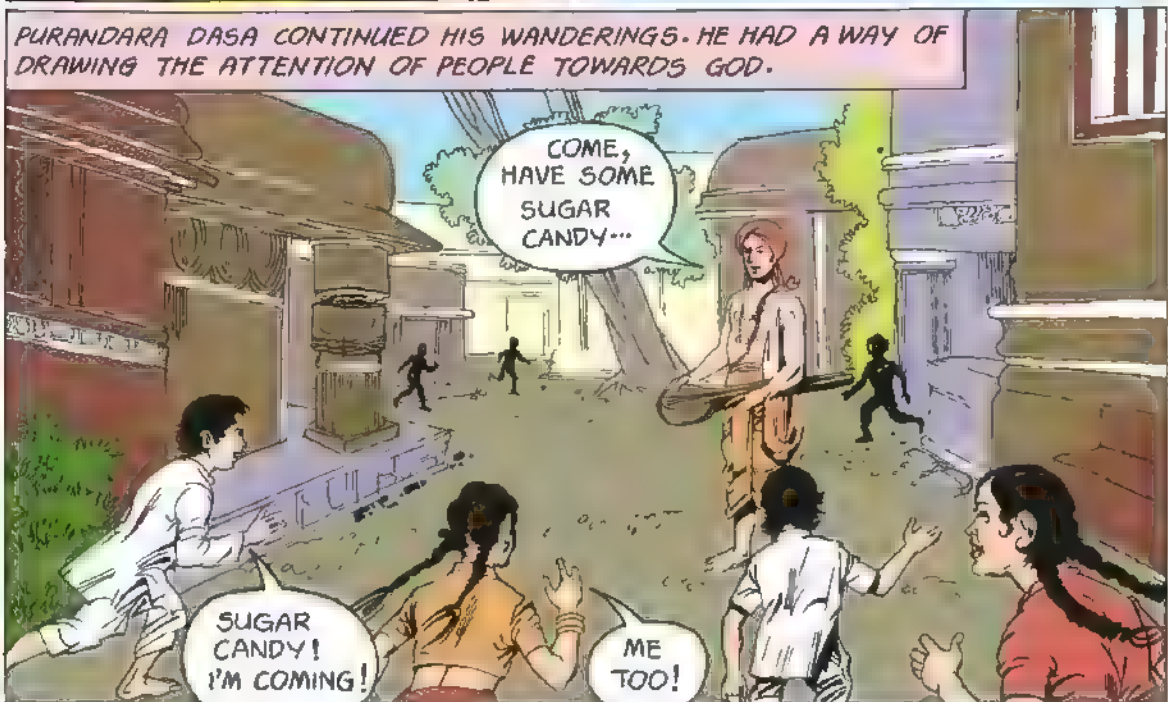
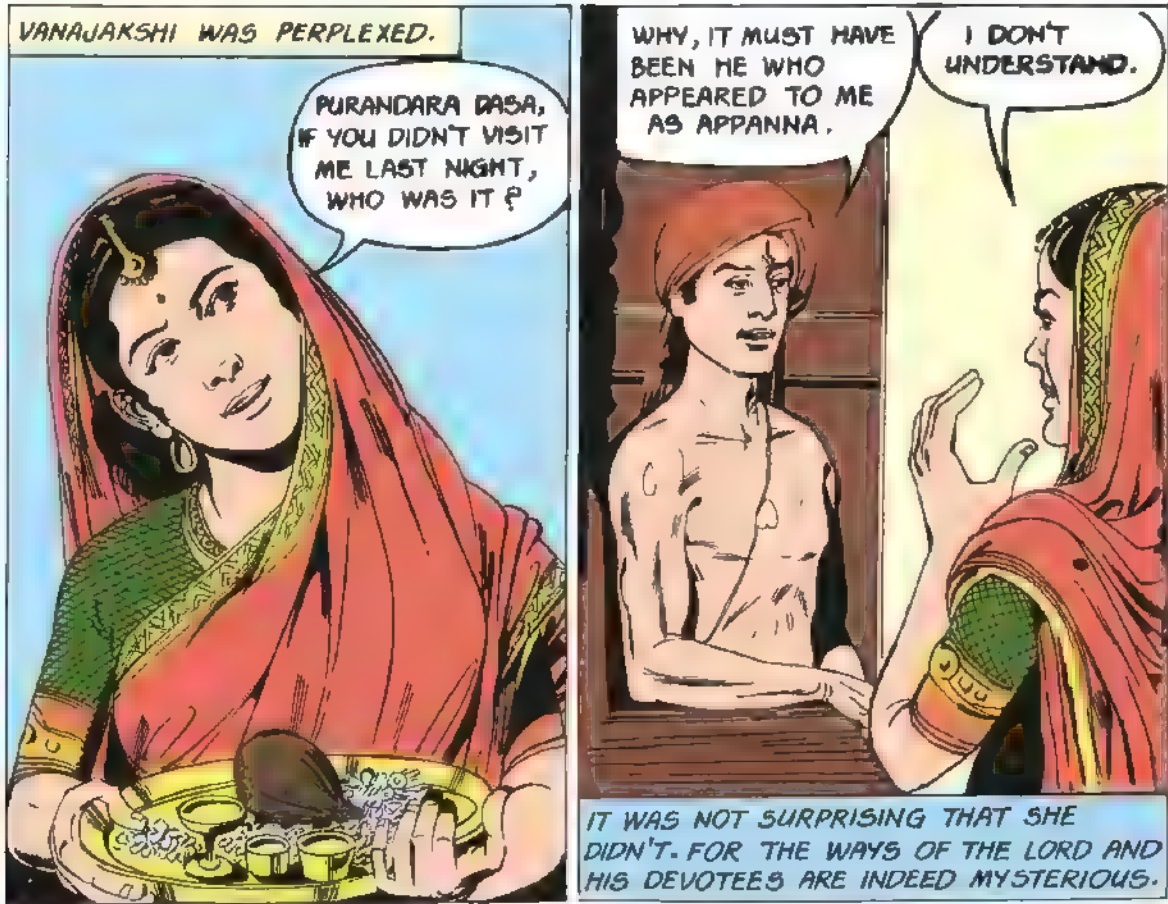




PURANDARA DASA WAS TIED TO A PILLAR AND WAS GIVEN A WHIPPING.

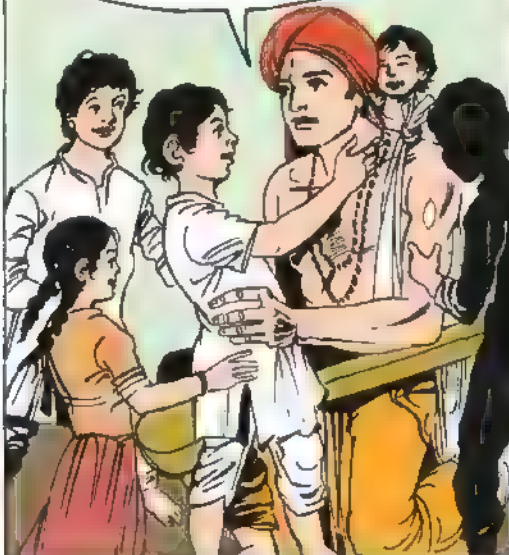






WHEN A CROWD WAS DRAWN BY THE MAGIC WORDS "SUGAR CANDY"—

...REPEAT THE SWEET NAME OF KRISHNA! IS THERE ANYTHING SWEETER THAN THAT?



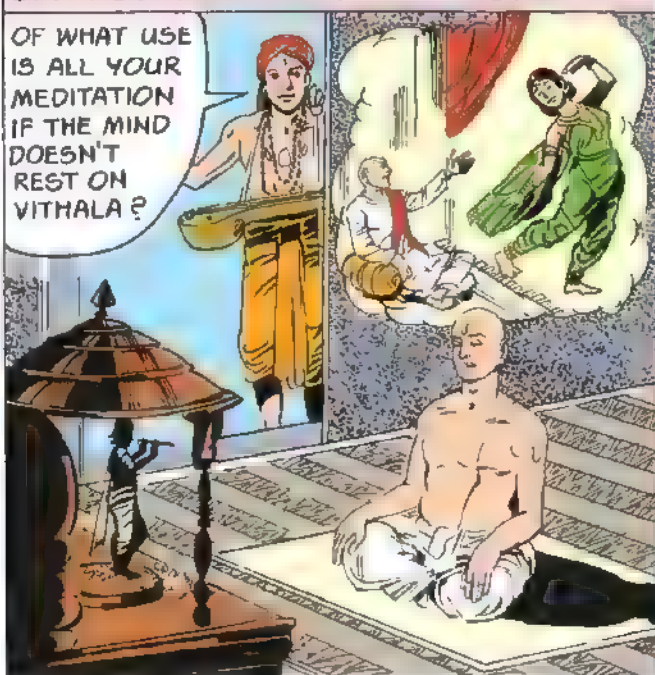
HE WOULD COMPLETE THE SONG, AND THE CROWD WOULD DANCE WITH HIM TO ITS TUNE.

...REPEAT THE SWEET NAME OF KRISHNA!



HE NOT ONLY SANG SONGS PRAISING GOD, BUT ALSO CONDEMNING HYPOCRISY.

OF WHAT USE IS ALL YOUR MEDITATION IF THE MIND DOESN'T REST ON VITHALA?



MASTER, YOU HAVE OPENED MY EYES!

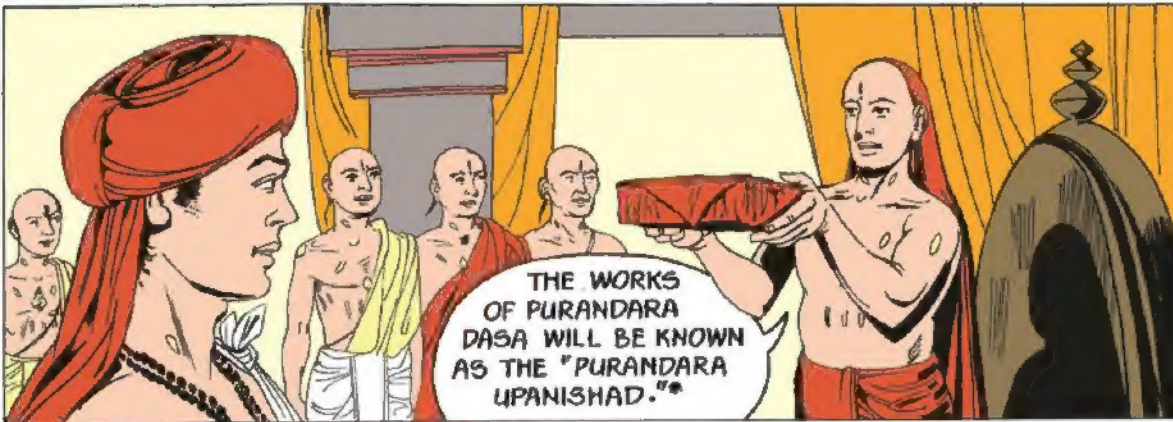




BUT NO SOONER HAD THE DISCIPLE KEPT THE WORKS ON THE FLOOR...



... THAN THEY SPRANG UP AND PLACED THEMSELVES ON THE VYASA PEETH.



PURANDARA DASA SPENT HIS LAST DAYS IN A RETREAT, SPECIALLY BUILT FOR HIM BY THE KING, ON A BANK OF THE RIVER TUNGABHADRA IN VIJAYANAGARA.



TO THIS DAY, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, PURANDARA DASA'S SONGS ARE SUNG AND HEARD BY LOVERS OF KARNATAK MUSIC.

\* UPANISHADS ARE THE SACRED SCRIPTURES OF THE HINDUS WHICH DEAL WITH THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN.



ONCE, PURANDARA DASA WENT TO SAINT VYASATEERTHA, CARRYING THE SONGS HE HAD WRITTEN.

PLEASE ACCEPT THE WORKS OF YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT.

PURANDARA DASA, THE PLACE FOR YOUR WORKS IS NOT THE FLOOR. GIVE THEM TO ME.

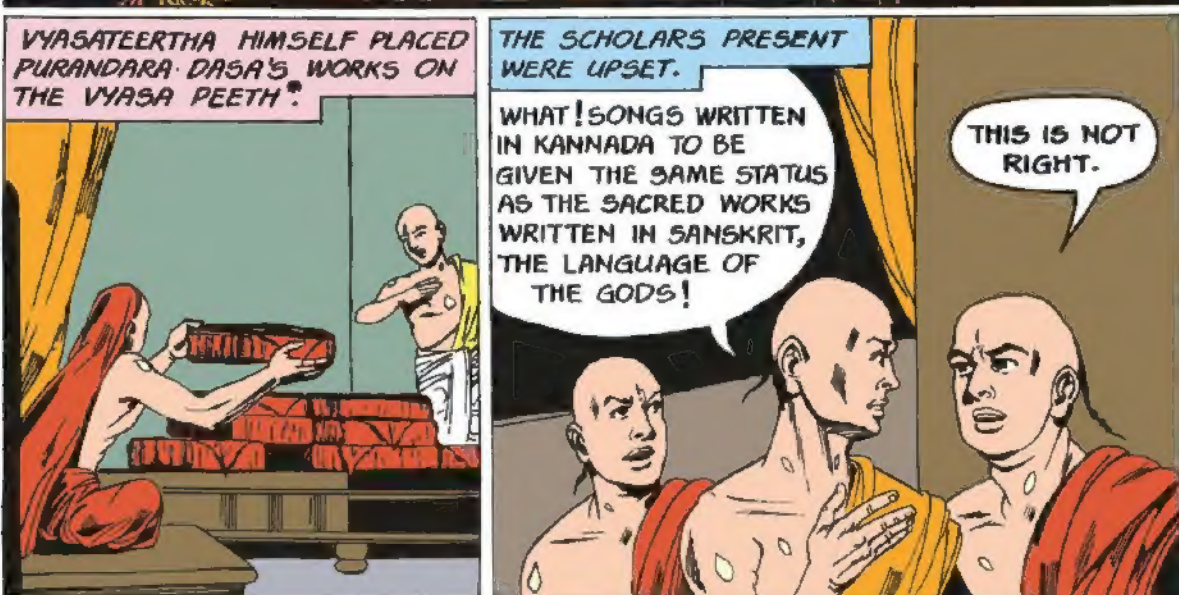


VYASATEERTHA HIMSELF PLACED PURANDARA DASA'S WORKS ON THE VYASA PEETH\*.

THE SCHOLARS PRESENT WERE UPSET.

WHAT! SONGS WRITTEN IN KANNADA TO BE GIVEN THE SAME STATUS AS THE SACRED WORKS WRITTEN IN SANSKRIT, THE LANGUAGE OF THE GODS!

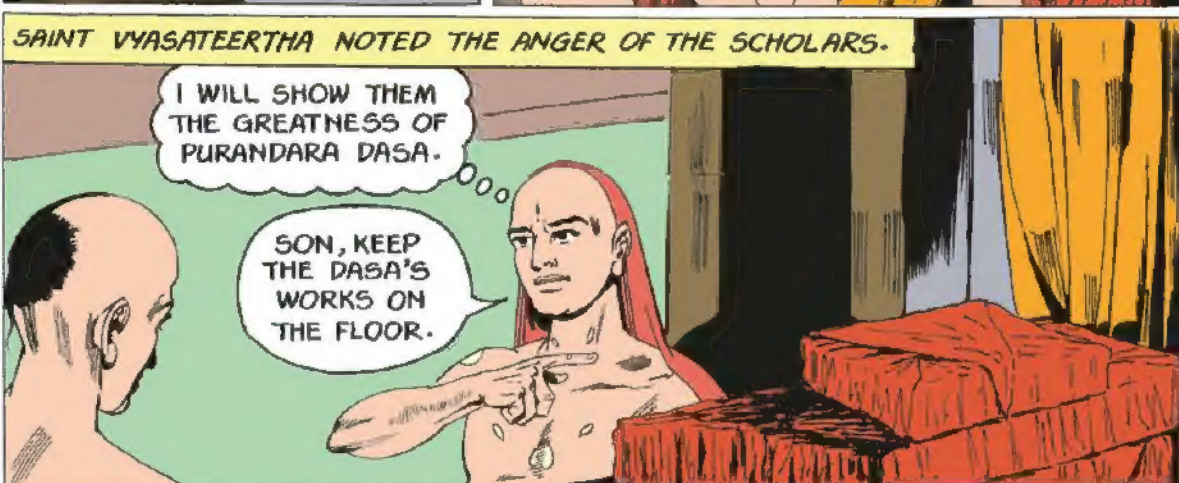
THIS IS NOT RIGHT.



SAINT VYASATEERTHA NOTED THE ANGER OF THE SCHOLARS.

I WILL SHOW THEM THE GREATNESS OF PURANDARA DASA.

SON, KEEP THE DASA'S WORKS ON THE FLOOR.



\* RAISED PLATFORM ON WHICH THE TEACHER OF THE SCRIPTURES SITS OR THE SCRIPTURES ARE PLACED.



## WHICH OF THE ACKs HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

### EPICS AND MYTHOLOGY

*Best known stories from the Epics and the Puranas*

Abhimanyu  
Agastya  
Andhaka  
Anuruddha  
Arjuni And Uttanka  
Ashwini Kumars  
Ayyappa  
Bahubali  
Bhanumati  
Bheema And Hanuman  
Bheeshma  
Chandrarasa  
Dasharatha  
Dhruva And Ashtavakra  
Draupadi  
Drona  
Elephanta  
Gandhari  
Ganesha  
Ganesha And The Moon  
Ganga  
Garuda  
Ghatotkacha  
Hanuman  
Hanuman To The Rescue  
Harischandra  
Heroes Of Hampi  
Indra And Shachi  
Indra And Shibi  
Indra And Vritra  
Jagannatha Of Puri  
Jayadratha  
Kacha And Devayani  
Karna  
Kartikaya  
Konark  
Krishna  
Krishna And Jerasandha  
Krishna And Narakasura  
Krishna And Rukmini  
Krishna And Shishupala  
Krishna And The False  
Vasudeva  
Kubera  
Kumbhakarna  
Mahabharata  
Mahiravana  
Nachiketa  
Nahusha  
Nala Damayanti  
Pareekshit  
Parashurama  
Prabhavati  
Pradyumna  
Prahlad  
Purushottam Dev And  
Padmavati  
Rama  
Ravana Humbled  
Saraswati  
Sati And Shiva  
Savitri  
Shiva Parvati  
Stories Of Creation  
Subhadra  
Sudama  
Sukanya  
Surya  
Tales From The  
Upanishads  
Tales Of Arjuna  
Tales Of Balarama  
Tales Of Durga  
Tales Of Indra  
Tales Of Narada

Tales Of Shiva  
Tales Of Vishnu  
Tales Of Yudhishtira  
Tapati  
Tharjavur  
The Churning Of The  
Ocean  
The Gita  
The Golden Mongoose  
The King In  
A Parrot's Body  
The Lord Of Lanka  
The Pandava Princes  
The Pandavas In Hiding  
The Parijata Tree  
The Sons Of Rama  
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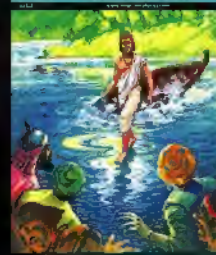
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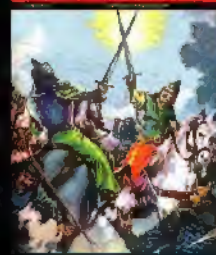
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